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United Nations

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the fifth session (27-31 March 2006)

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Note

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Summary

The present report contains the conclusions and recommendations of the fifth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, held at United Nations Headquarters from 27 to 31 March 2006. The Committee, which was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity for a four-year period. The Committee dealt with the following substantive items: (a) innovations in governance and public administration for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals; (b) searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration; (c) creation of a compendium of basic terminology in governance and public administration; and (d) review of the activities of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance.

Based on the discussion of the above-mentioned topics, the Committee recommended to the Economic and Social Council a draft resolution for its consideration and adoption. The Committee also produced a set of conclusions for consideration by the Council, Member States and the Secretariat.

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hapter I

Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fifth session and dates, venue and provisional agenda for the sixth session of the Committee

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2003/60 of 25 July 2003, 2005/3 of 31 March 2005 and 2005/55 of 21 October 2005,

Reaffirming the central role of governance capacity-building in meeting internationally agreed commitments and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, as referred to in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[1]

Recognizing that Member States stand to gain from peer learning and the sharing of experiences in public administration innovation,

Noting the content of the Declaration on Community Engagement,[2] adopted at the first International Conference on Engaging Communities, held in Brisbane, Australia from 14 to 17 August 2005, and recognizing the utility of that declaration for the work of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on participatory governance,

Noting with appreciation the Declaration on Participatory and Transparent Governance adopted at the sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, held in Seoul from 24 to 27 May 2005,[3]

Welcoming the recommendations of the *World Public Sector Report*, 2005: *Unlocking the Human Potential for Public Sector Performance*, highlighting the strategic importance of improving the quality of human resources in the public sector as a means of developing strong institutions for public administration,

Appreciating the leading role played by the United Nations in documenting and disseminating global best practices in governance and public administration with the purpose of meeting the objectives of the United Nations development agenda,

1. *Takes note* of the report on the session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration;[4]

2. *Encourages* Governments to create an environment that is supportive of change management, risk assessment and innovation so that they may provide better services to their citizens;

[1] General Assembly resolution 60/1.
[2] See E/C.16/2006/5.
[3] A/60/391.
[4] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 24* (E/2005/44).

3. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen citizen trust in government by fostering public participation in key processes of public policy development, public service delivery and public accountability;

4. *Requests* the Secretariat to work with Governments with a view to assisting them to deepen the impact of the United Nations Public Service Awards by promoting and disseminating innovation in governance and public administration;

5. *Also requests* the Secretariat to respond expeditiously to requests from Governments regarding the design, implementation and evaluation of participatory processes, including the dissemination of best practices of citizen participation;

6. *Encourages* the Secretariat to further strengthen the linkages between analytical work and operational activities;

7. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue to assist Member States in developing e-government tools to improve participation, transparency, accountability and service delivery and to increase sharing of information, products and resources throughout the United Nations public administration network;

8. *Welcomes* the organization of the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government, to be held in Vienna in 2007, and in this connection encourages the active participation of Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector to exchange innovations and best practices that promote trust in government;

9. *Approves* the decision of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to work along a multi-year programme based on the following priority areas:

2007

- Participatory governance and citizens' engagement in policy development, service delivery and budgeting

2008

- Capacity-building for development, including post-conflict reconstruction of public administration and crisis/disaster management

2009

- Building transparency, accountability and trust, including leadership development through information and communications technology tools

2010

- Governance, public administration and the United Nations development agenda

and to link it more closely to the theme of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Public Service Awards;

10. *Approves* the convening of the sixth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in the second quarter of 2007;

11. *Approves also* the following agenda for the sixth session of the Committee:

1. Participatory governance and citizens' engagement in policy development, service delivery and budgeting.
2. Compendium of basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration.
3. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance
4. Public administration perspective on the theme of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Duration of the session

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General. The Committee held its fifth session at United Nations Headquarters from 27 to 31 March 2006.

B. Attendance

2. The session was attended by 23 members of the Committee. Observers from organizations of the United Nations system and from intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended.

3. The session was attended by the following Committee members: Luis F. Aguilar Villanueva (Mexico), Peter Angyang'Nyong'o (Kenya), Ousmane Batoko (Benin), Marie-Francoise Bechtel (France), Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdellah (Morocco), Emilia T. Boncodin (Philippines), Jocelyne Bourgon (Canada), Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira (Brazil), Mario P. Chiti (Italy), Mikhail Dmitriev (Russian Federation), Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa), Edgar Gonzalez Salas (Colombia), Werner Jann (Germany), Taher H. Kanaan (Jordan), Pan Suk Kim (Republic of Korea), Barbara Kudrycka (Poland), Florin Lupescu (Romania), Anthony Makrydemetres (Greece), Siripurapu Kesava Rao (India), Dennis A. Rondinelli (United States of America), Prijono Tjiptoherijanto (Indonesia), Wang Xiaochu (China) and Gwendoline Anne Williams (Trinidad and Tobago).

4. The following member could not attend: José Oscar Monteiro (Mozambique).

5. The list of observers who attended the session may be viewed on the United Nations intranet (see http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan022432.pdf).

C. Agenda

6. The agenda of the Committee for its fifth session was as follows:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration.

4 Innovations in governance and public administration for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

5. Compendium of basic terminology in governance and public administration.

6. Review of United Nations activities in the area of public administration.

7. Proposed programme of work and agenda for the sixth session of the Committee of Experts.

D. Election of officers

7. The Committee by consensus elected the following members to the positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur:

Chairperson:

Jocelyne **Bourgon** (Canada)

Vice-Chairpersons:

Geraldine J. **Fraser-Moleketi** (South Africa)
Taher H. **Kanaan** (Jordan)
Wang Xiaochu (China)

Rapporteur:

Luis F. Aguilar **Villanueva** (Mexico)

Chapter III

Summary of proceedings and conclusions

A. Work of the Committee

1. The welcome address delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, José Antonio Ocampo, on 27 March 2006, provided the framework for organizing the Committee's work and establishing priorities. In his address, the Under-Secretary-General underscored that the decisions contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome[1] on development issues, reforming the Economic and Social Council and strengthening the coherence of the United Nations system had guided and provided major impetus to the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. To bring coherence to the planning and implementation of the programme, attention would be focused on four critical areas: post-conflict reconstruction of governance and public administration systems; participatory governance; capacity-building and promotion of professionalism and ethics in the public sector; and information and communications technology for development.

2. With the new priority areas as its point of departure, the Committee deliberated on how to fulfil its mandate and make contributions that would support the work of the Economic and Social Council. The ensuing debate revealed a divergence of ideas on how to enhance the impact of the Committee. While some members took a strategic view of its role, essentially that of enunciating general principles or focusing on the key factors of governance and public administration, others were inclined to support contributions of a practical nature, linked to national and regional initiatives. Others advocated a mid-way course, combining the general, overarching approach with specific, problem-solving and incremental contributions.

3. The Committee agreed that its composition afforded it a rare opportunity to place professional and intellectual competencies at the service of the United Nations. To enable it to put those competencies to optimum use, it agreed to prepare a multi-year programme based on the four priority areas mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General and the conclusions of the meeting with the Bureau of the Council. Such a thematic approach would not only enable the Committee to discuss regional perspectives and trends, but also help it to organize its own activities and to advise the Secretariat as to products or output (for example, policy options or occasional papers, full-length publications or even themes for the Global Forum) deserving special attention.

4. The Committee was briefed on the outcome of the meeting between its Bureau and that of the Economic and Social Council. It welcomed the opportunity offered by the meeting to align the Committee's long-term programme with the priorities and concerns of the Council. The Committee observed that over the upcoming four-year period, it was expected to focus on four thematic areas: participatory governance in 2007; capacity-building in 2008; transparency, accountability and trust in 2009; and governance, public administration and the United Nations development agenda in 2010. While details of how to strengthen the linkage between the Committee's multi-year programme with the themes of the Council's annual high-level segment still had to be finalized, the Committee was satisfied that

[1] General Assembly resolution 60/1.

the four-year programme laid the groundwork that could be further developed through members' interaction. This would require that, in the intervening period, members would communicate, both to each other and to the Secretariat, ideas and suggestions aimed, inter alia, at promoting synergy between the themes of the Council and the Committee, elaborating and clarifying the topics to be tackled under each thematic heading and integrating the recurrent activities of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management with the four-year work programme of the Committee.

B. Innovations in governance and public administration for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

5. The note by the Secretariat E/C.16/2006/2 highlighted key issues in governance and public administration innovation and discussed their relevance to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The issues examined in the paper included: (a) why Governments should innovate; (b) the nature of innovation in governance and public administration; (c) what are the emerging principles and strategies in governance and public administration innovation for achieving the Millennium Development Goals?; (d) what facilitates or hinders innovation in public administration?; (e) what can Governments do to create an enabling environment for innovation in public administration?; and (f) what are the tools and methodologies for sharing and adapting innovations in governance and public administration?

6. The note argued that Governments around the world needed to break with "business as usual" and engage in innovative ways of designing public policies, delivering public services and organizing the way they function and deploy their resources. An innovation could involve the incorporation of new elements, a new combination of existing elements or a significant change or departure from the traditional way of doing things. It referred to new products, policies and programmes, regulations and processes. However the term "innovation" is conceptualized what counts is that a practice should produce significant results in terms of improving the quality of life of citizens creating public value. In other words, innovation is not an end in itself nor should it be regarded as a fad, but as a means to achieving specific objectives, including poverty eradication, social equity and gender participation in public affairs.

7. While there is wide consensus at the international level on what should be done to accelerate development and prosperity, there seems to be less shared knowledge and capacity on how to do so. Knowledge on how to achieve the Millennium Development Goals exists, but it is often fragmented and spread among several countries. Sharing knowledge on innovations and successful practices can provide Governments with a set of concrete and workable options on how to achieve internationally agreed goals. Focusing on innovations affords the opportunity to shift attention from what Governments should do to respond to increasingly complex challenges to how they can do it. Learning from other countries can save time, inspire new reforms and, in some cases, help countries to leapfrog stages of development. Furthermore, sharing successful practices is relevant not so much in the sense that a country can transfer an existing model from another country into its

own administrative system, but rather that it can adapt elements of successful practices from other contexts to its internal circumstances, and most importantly that this process can serve as an incentive to jump-start other similar initiatives.

Comments and conclusions of the Committee

8. At the end of the presentation, the Committee commended the Secretariat for its role in supporting the Member States in their efforts to promote innovation in government. The Committee noted the warning of the Secretariat that the presentation was not meant to be a final and definitive statement on innovation. It underlined the fact that the United Nations had an important role to play in fostering awareness of innovation and promoting capacity-building for innovation at the national and local levels among Member States. It reiterated that the exchange of successful experiences was very important, since people could learn from one another and improve their capacities to innovate. It suggested that the United Nations strengthen its function as a forum for the exchange of innovations and critical issues in public administration among countries and cultures. In that respect, the impact of the United Nations Public Service Awards should be increased.

9. The Committee noted that innovative practices were not as developed in government as in the private sector, although the public sector had been much more innovative (for example, in regulations, structures, service delivery processes) than generally recognized. It also noted that the theme of innovation was high on the agenda of Governments concerned with improving the performance of the public sector (to rebuild citizens' trust and consolidate democracy), stressed the importance of recognizing the problem-solving nature of innovations and highlighted that if developing countries wanted to achieve the Millennium Development Goals they needed to abandon practices that had proven to be ineffective or counterproductive. It also cautioned that not all innovations were conducive to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and greater trust in democratic governance. Thus, in the view of the Committee, it was important to have a strategic perspective when defining the areas towards which innovation efforts were being directed (for example, human capital, financial resources and partnerships). The Committee also pointed out that innovation could be seen as opposed to routine or traditional ways of doing business in the public sector, and emphasized that it required freedom of thought and expression to materialize, as well as an open society and public administrative structures that encouraged dialogue among public servants, whose knowledge was kept in high esteem. Innovation was about learning what works and what doesn't work. The Committee added that in order to qualify as an innovation, a practice must abide by the rule of law and be ethically sustainable.

10. The Committee agreed that political and cultural conditions outside and within the public sector, as well as wide acceptance from stakeholders of specific policy areas, determined whether an innovation was successful. It noted that innovations in the public sector depended on two critical factors: willingness to change and take risks; and managerial capacity to lead change and take risks, and the resources needed for such change. In many cases, Governments lacked the capacity to manage change and the skills necessary to work horizontally rather than vertically. The Committee furthermore remarked that innovations were unpredictable in terms of results and not always successful or accepted by all stakeholders. The Committee also stressed that sometimes innovation was not a priority in the public sector, in

particular in those instances where a rational-legal bureaucracy did not exist. Consequently, civil servants generally had little incentive to innovate.

11. In the light of the above, the Committee underlined the importance of change management and of devising mechanisms to effectively monitor and evaluate the extent to which innovation had improved Government performance and the quality of life in society. It noted that creating an enabling environment in the public sector and nurturing a government culture to manage risk and change were key factors in fostering innovation. In that regard, national human resources development policies that could help train human resources to be more effective and to change the mindsets and behaviour that impede good governance were essential.

12. The Committee believed that it was important to make a distinction between innovations and conditions that allowed innovation to succeed. Decentralization and privatization, for example, could be potentially good innovations, but if the conditions were not in place to allow the processes to work in the right way, they were likely to fail. The Committee underlined that innovation practices could sometimes create new problems and engender conflict under certain conditions. Thus, it was important to focus on how to avoid conflict in the process of innovation.

13. The Committee raised the issue of whether individuals or institutional arrangements were the key factor in promoting innovation. While there was agreement that individuals rather than Governments introduce innovative practice and that leadership plays a critical role in such innovation, there was also consensus that without adequate institutional arrangements, policies and incentives, it was very difficult to introduce significant and meaningful changes in the public sector. The Committee underlined that innovation depended on the quality and quantity of regulation and that, in order to become widespread and sustainable, it needed to be institutionalized. Promoting a policy of innovation was thus central to the promotion of positive change in public administration.

14. The Committee also pointed out that innovation in the public sector depended on the motivation of civil servants to innovate and their satisfaction, as well as on the satisfaction of citizens. How to prepare young professionals to help and sustain innovations in the public sector was, according to the Committee, another important and interlinked issue which should be given particular attention. In terms of the motivation of the political class, the Committee pointed out that while in the private sector innovation was dictated by profit, in the public sector politicians were motivated by voting patterns. The Committee furthermore noted that women and the young, which represent the majority of the population in developing countries, should be actively incorporated into public decision-making and in the governance processes in general. It also felt that citizens should be trained to value democratic processes and innovation.

15. The Committee remarked that since innovations in government were circumscribed in nature and scope, the issue of scalability was very important; how to scale up, disseminate and implement innovations in a consistent manner across the different layers of the administration was an issue that deserved full attention. Similarly, the Committee noted that given that innovations were micro-interventions in the reform processes of the public sector, they were not always sufficient in promoting better governance. In some cases, more substantive and comprehensive changes to social and political structures were needed to foster good governance.

The Committee noted that a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy offered the greatest opportunity for innovations. However, when there were changes in those holding office, innovation could sometimes mean reversing the policies of previous governments in order to project an image of change to the public, with possible negative consequences for good governance.

16. The Committee advised the Secretariat to facilitate innovations in governance in United Nations Member States by (a) maximizing the use of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN) as a repository of innovations in governance; (b) conducting analytical research on innovations in governance, and preparing practical case studies useful for replication of innovative ideas; (c) documenting and disseminating knowledge on innovations, including the achievements of the winners of the United Nations Public Service Awards; and (d) providing leadership capacity-building programmes on innovations. The Committee further recommended that the Secretariat focus on good policies and legislation for innovation and on mainstreaming successful knowledge systems as a national policy tool.

17. The Committee advised the Secretariat to examine several key questions in order to better assist Member States to introduce change in the public sector, including: how do new ideas get accepted?; what is involved in the process of innovation?; how to build political coalitions to support and validate the innovation process?; what are the main obstacles that should be addressed?; how can the effectiveness of innovations be assessed?; how can innovations be sustained?; and what happens when the leader that initiated the innovation leaves office? Finally, the Committee recommended that the Secretariat analyse the incentives for innovation among Governments and civil servants, and that in its work it address the issue of innovation in the public sector at the local and national levels and in multilateral organizations.

18. The Committee also recommended that the Secretariat devise tools and methods for risk assessment and change management in the public sector, given that all innovations inevitably modify the status quo of public administration and thus encounter resistance. In that respect, it was suggested that change risk management could be one of the issues for discussion at a future session of the Committee.

19. Lastly, the Committee suggested that, as regards documenting innovations and better assisting Member States to transfer and adapt successful experiences, the Secretariat should continue to focus on uncovering, from a practical point of view, the "blackbox" of the process through which innovations in government come about, a process that is often messy and complex. This should be applied to the documentation of international and national public service awards.

C. Searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration

20. In conformity with the request of the Committee at its fourth session, the Secretariat presented a report entitled, "Searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public

administration" (E/C.16/2006/3). The report focused on instruments designed to generate information on bottom-up strategies adopted within and across countries.

21. The Secretariat noted in its presentation that the design of the instrument was preceded by a set of assumptions, including:

(a) There is as yet no universally accepted model of governance and public administration that is firmly anchored on bottom-up principles;

(b) Such a model stands a good chance of being widely adopted if its construction is preceded by empirical studies;

(c) Countries in different parts of the world have, with varying degrees of success, applied different approaches to achieve bottom-up public administration solutions;

(d) Despite the enormous differences between and among cultures, there is a broad measure of consensus on the need for public administration systems that are at once inclusive, participative, accountable and "customer-caring";

(e) The launching of a cross-cultural study will accelerate the movement towards a convergence of views on a bottom up approach and on methodologies for fostering participatory governance;

(f) To generate necessary and relevant data, the study will have to explore more than one source (thus necessitating the development of three questionnaires, instead of one).

22. The Secretariat briefed the Committee on three draft questionnaires that individually and collectively addressed four issues: sound public administration principles; the definition of a "bottom-up" approach or strategy (including its variants and derivatives); how public administration principles could be made to respond to citizen concerns; and recommendations to eliminate obstacles to the effective application of citizen-oriented public administration principles.

Comments and conclusions of the Committee

23. The note by the Secretariat generated a lively debate, in particular on the conceptual and methodological issues raised. Though the Committee shared the view that a single universal model of participatory governance was unrealistic considering the cross-cultural differences that the model would have to contend with, it reaffirmed the linkage between good governance and citizen participation. While there is no conclusive evidence that citizen participation automatically leads to better performance by the government and greater citizen satisfaction, the Committee shared the general view that the strengthening of participatory institutions and opportunities and mechanisms would go a long way to building citizen trust in government. The Committee identified areas in which citizen participation was considered critical, such as decentralization, public policy design, implementation and evaluation, public service delivery, budgeting, project monitoring and assessment, performance auditing and expenditure tracking.

24. Realizing the magnitude of the challenge that the Secretariat would face if it embarked on the conduct of cross-cultural surveys, the Committee advised that attention first be given to desk studies, preparation of country case studies and the provision of assistance to Member States that sought such assistance, in particular

on the design and administration of instruments for evaluating participatory processes and their impact on the individual citizen. The best practices emanating from such modest and incremental efforts should then be closely linked with the United Nations Public Service Awards.

25. The United Nations plays a major role in sensitizing the Member States and local stakeholders about the need to institute policies that enhance opportunities for citizen participation. The Secretariat should also place its technical advisory facilities at the disposal of the Member States, especially, those that seek assistance on the design of instruments for monitoring and evaluating participatory processes and their impact on citizens.

26. The Committee accordingly decided that the topic of participatory governance should remain on its agenda. Discussions at subsequent sessions should take into account the findings of the forthcoming *World Public Sector Report 2007* on the same theme. The Committee also advised the Secretariat to support the process leading to the publication of the report by undertaking:

- Review of literature and desk studies on approaches adopted by, and the obstacles facing, countries in fostering citizen participation in governance and public administration;
- Preparation of country case studies.

D. Compendium of basic terminology in governance and public administration

27. As part of the effort to achieve a common understanding of basic governance concepts and terminologies adopted within the United Nations and allied organizations, the Secretariat presented a note to the Committee (E/C.16/2006/4). The Secretariat noted that concepts and terminologies were neither static nor applied in a uniform way in all places and cultures, and recalled that the Committee had agreed at its fourth session that a participatory process was essential in identifying the main governance and public administration principles. The Committee had further expressed interest in how the concepts had evolved and how they were used and applied. The Committee had felt that definition of those concepts and related terminologies could help to build a common language and understanding, which would greatly facilitate dialogue on governmental principles and processes, thus enriching the work of scholars and practitioners alike. As an initial step, the note by the Secretariat presented a limited inventory of concepts and terminologies.

28. In its comments, the Committee noted that there were analytical and normative uses of the terms included in the report. According to the Committee, the Secretariat should focus on the normative aspect, without however ignoring the analytical aspect altogether. Viewed narrowly, the compendium prepared by the Secretariat should be similar to a glossary rather than a full-blown encyclopaedia. Adaptations and changes in usage from one epoch to another should also be highlighted and specified. The Committee was also of the view that defining the terms served a useful purpose only insofar as the terms were related to the perspectives, goals and recommendations of the United Nations.

29. The Committee noted that there are terms that are integral to any public administration not covered in the report, which needed to be defined. Such terms

included the "rule of law", "ombudsman institutions", "sustainability", "proportionality", "subsidiarity", "risk management", "interorganizational/international governance and administration", "public interest" and "general interest". The concept of "civil society" also needed to be clarified. It was necessary to state whether "civil society" was a third sector separate from the public and the private-economic sector. The term "new public management" as a global public management reform movement also needed to be further developed.

30. The Committee furthermore stated that the report should take account of the contributions of jurisprudence. For instance, the European Union has codified certain concepts and terms in its official documents. The compendium should also cover the terms frequently used in United Nations documents.

31. The Committee took issue with the adoption of specific terms, in particular those promoted by certain vested interests but that might not be acceptable in other quarters. An example was the term "pro-poor", which some deemed highly patronizing without advancing the interests of the poor.

32. The Committee was of the view that the terms included in the glossary could be arranged either thematically or alphabetically. In the light of the value attached to the exercise, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that it be continued and further developed. The topic should therefore be included on the agenda of the Committee at its sixth session.

33. The Committee agreed on the need for a common language to facilitate communication on public administration issues brought before the Council and other United Nations entities. The exercise should initially concentrate on public administration terms, especially those frequently used in United Nations documents that are not easily understood. In proceeding with the exercise, the Secretariat should take into account similar initiatives implemented by other institutions.

34. The Committee also set up a working group to discuss, on an ongoing basis, issues ranging from the scope of the exercise, the title of the volume through to the elaboration and development of the glossary. The group would be composed not only of public administration scholars but also of practitioners.

E. Review of the activities of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

35. The Secretariat presented a note (E/C.16/2006/5) highlighting its activities in the area of public administration, finance and development. The report cited examples of the normative, analytical, knowledge management, dissemination and technical cooperation activities undertaken in different areas, especially in innovation in public administration, post-conflict reconstruction of public administration systems, participatory governance and information communications technology for improving the efficiency, quality and transparency of governance. A few important initiatives undertaken in cooperation with various partners within and outside the United Nations system during the reporting period were also discussed.

36. Commenting on the report, the Committee congratulated the Secretariat on its achievements. The Committee was particularly impressed by the range of activities undertaken and the quality of outputs produced during the period, in spite of the serious staffing constraints. The Committee furthermore commended the Secretariat

for having built partnerships with external institutions, in particular with universities and professional bodies actively engaged in extending the frontiers of knowledge and promoting best practices in governance and public administration.

37. The Committee took note of the fact that the preparation of a draft strategic framework for 2008-2009 was not yet under way. Nevertheless, the hope was expressed that later in 2006, members of the Committee would have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft strategic framework prior to its finalization and submission to the General Assembly.

38. The Committee appreciated the initiative by the Secretariat to concentrate the activities of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management on four substantive areas: post-conflict reconstruction of governance and public administration systems; participatory governance; capacity-building and promotion of professionalism and ethics in the public sector; and information and communications technology for development. In the Committee's view, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would then be able to mobilize and deploy its limited resources to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals and address the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit. The Secretariat was requested to take full advantage of existing mechanisms for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its activities.

39. While focusing on the four priority areas, the Secretariat was requested to give attention to the other themes associated with the four priority areas. The issues that the Committee felt deserved attention included: public service leadership; judicial and legislative administration and institutional capacity-building for agencies involved in regulatory reforms; budgeting; revenue administration; the administration of incentives; and development assistance management.

40. While acknowledging the quality and quantity of constructive work being implemented by the Secretariat in the area of public administration, the Committee emphasized the need for further cooperation between the Secretariat and other international partners active in the field. In that connection, the observer of the Republic of Korea expressed his Government's willingness to establish an international governance centre in close cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

41. The Committee noted with appreciation the accomplishments of UNPAN and acknowledged the role it plays as a vital link in the global network of public administration organizations. The Committee welcomed the second phase of project implementation during which its membership would be extended to the subregional and national levels.

42. The Committee reiterated the importance of the commemoration of 23 June as United Nations Public Service Day and the presentation of the United Nations Public Service Awards. The events help to motivate public servants all over the world and to inspire them towards exemplary conduct and performance. The Committee therefore called upon Member States to support the events and to participate actively in the Awards programme.

43. To enhance the impact of the programme, the Committee suggested that the Awards be linked to a specific theme every year. More reliable comparison and evaluation of nominations would then be possible. The Committee also recommended that the Secretariat explore the possibility of linking up with existing

national and regional public administration awards programmes with a view to sharing information.

F. Preparatory session for the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government

44. As part of agenda item 6, the Secretariat reported on the preparation for the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government, one of its flagship activities designed to foster improvements in public administration and governance. The United Nations has offered to host the Forum, which is to take place at the United Nations Office at Vienna in June 2007. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs will take the lead in organizing the event and act in partnership with entities of the United Nations system and external partners through the Institutional Partners Group, which would assist in organizing the capacity-development workshops.

45. The proposed theme for the Forum is "Building trust in government". The theme will be broken down into six sub-themes, with discussions on each held in plenary sessions and capacity-development workshops. The sub-themes proposed are:

(a) Role of the public sector in service delivery and access;

(b) Decentralization and local governance to bring government closer to the citizens;

(c) E-government for participation and information;

(d) Electoral and parliamentary process for legitimacy;

(e) Accountability and transparency to promote confidence in government;

(f) Government, civil society, and private sector partnerships to promote participation and access.

The Secretariat distributed a brief synopsis of each sub-theme to the Committee.

46. In introducing the theme for the Forum, the Secretariat referred to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and noted that the international community was increasingly recognizing the centrality of governance and public administration for the achievement of objectives on the United Nations development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Secretariat stressed the importance of trust in government for effective policy formulation and implementation. According to the Secretariat, the issue of trust was becoming increasingly central, as illustrated by reports from both nascent and established democracies.

47. The Secretariat concluded by soliciting the views and suggestions of the Committee on matters pertaining to the organization of the Forum. It welcomed comments on best practices for enhancing trust in government, the content of the proposed sub-themes and references to substantive work on the subject that the Committee would like to highlight.

Comments and conclusions of the Committee

48. In response to the presentation, the Committee suggested a number of topics that should be included in the programme of the Global Forum, including cross-cutting themes that could be merged. The Committee agreed on the overall relevance of the proposed sub-themes, stating that they touched upon issues of contemporary concern in the field of governance and public administration. It further discussed the option of whether the Forum should aim to provide a broad and comprehensive examination of the sub-themes or whether it should narrow the focus to target key and emerging issues.

49. The Committee suggested that the Forum consider a number of topics, including: the role of social capital; citizen engagement; the cost of mistrust; conflict management and resolution; building trust in failed States and in post-conflict situations; trust in societies in transition; the importance of dialogue; social cohesion and social inclusion; public confidence in leadership; the quality of public administration and management; crisis management, fiscal management and oversight; the social cost of outsourcing; procurement; regulatory frameworks; the need for governance frameworks for public-private partnerships; the role of elections and the quality of the electoral process; the parliamentary process and oversight of the executive branch; the independence of the judiciary; the balance of power among the three branches of government; access to justice; standards of integrity for public service; and the need for baseline data to help measure service delivery and access vis-à-vis the Millennium Development Goals.

50. The Committee noted the Secretariat's assurance that the impact of past Forums, including the most recent, had been evaluated. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to continue tracking the impact of the Forums on the dissemination of best practices in the field of governance and public administration. The Committee concluded by commending the Secretariat for the action to date to prepare for the Forum.

G. Presentations

51. In addition to the above agenda items, the following presentations were also made:

(a) "Innovation in public administration in the Republic of Korea", presented by Jong-in Yoon, Deputy Head of Headquarters of Innovation, Republic of Korea;

(b) "Guatemala: experience of reform of the public sector", presented by Harris Whitbeck, High Commissioner for State Reform, Guatemala;

(c) "Promoting citizen participation in governance: recent efforts in Lesotho", presented by Pontso Sekatle, Minister for Local Government, Lesotho.

Annex

List of documents

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/C.16/2006/1	2	Provisional agenda and organization of work
E/C.16/2006/2	3	Innovations in governance and public administration for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals
E/C.16/2006/3	4	Bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration: questionnaires
E/C.16/2006/4	5	Definition of basic concepts and terminologies in governance and public administration

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